

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

held on Thursday, 3rd March, 2011 at Silk Room, Macclesfield Town Hall

PRESENT

Councillor G M Walton (Chairman)
Councillor A Martin (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors G Barton, R Fletcher, L Gilbert, M Hollins, T Jackson, M Parsons, C G Thorley, C Beard and A Thwaite.

In attendance

Councillors R Menlove and L Smetham

Officers:

Ray Skipp	Waste and Recycling Manager
Mark Grimshaw	Scrutiny Officer

Apologies

Councillors M J Weatherill, M Simon and S Davies.

81 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

None

82 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/ OPEN SESSION

Mr. John Tomlinson, a resident from Alderley Edge attended to comment on the transformation of waste and recycling collection services. It was explained that he was speaking from a position of experience in waste inspection.

Mr. Tomlinson began by stating that he welcomed the proposals outlined in the paper, particularly those around increasing the range of materials that could be collected.

Having said this, Mr. Tomlinson continued to outline a number of detailed issues which he felt had not been sufficiently explained or touched upon in the paper.

- Whether or not 'bring sites' would continue in the new arrangements or be abolished
- As household recycling centres would be used less in the new system, had the possible consequences of prices and charges been considered.
- Whether or not waste would be disaggregated once collected to ensure that it would be recycled effectively.

- That to encourage people to recycle, it would be useful to provide a smaller bin for residual waste.
- Whether or not consideration had been made to review the 'task and finish' nature of waste collection practice, as this had occasionally made crews rush, with bins resultantly left in inconvenient places.
- That no numerical targets had been outlined for recycling.

As a final point, Mr. Tomlinson contended that more effort should have been made to consult with the public prior to the drafting of the report.

83 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 JANUARY 2011

RESOLVED –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

84 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 FEBRUARY 2011

RESOLVED –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

85 TRANSFORMATION OF WASTE AND RECYCLING COLLECTION SERVICES

Ray Skipp attended to provide a report describing the transformation of waste and recycling collection centres and its subsequent impact on the Council and its residents.

It was explained how Cheshire East's current recycling figure was at 50%, meaning that the central government target for 2020 had already been met. Having said this, it was reported how the service wanted to keep improving this figure and that to achieve this, a 'step change' in practice would be required. In accepting this, the service had carried out a full review which found that there was a need to rationalise the services provided, create flexibility in service provision and optimise the resources at Cheshire East's disposal. It was reported how the review had led to a redesign of collection methods and routes which would be implemented in two phases. Phase 1 would be implemented from the southern depot at Pym's Lane, Crewe from 9 May 2011 with phase 2 being implemented from the northern depot at Commercial Road, Macclesfield from 3 October 2011.

Ray Skipp continued to explain as part of the roll out of both phases, there would be a comprehensive communications plan for each phase which would take into consideration the target audience, the key messages needed, the channels of communication required and the main risks to its success.

After considering the report in detail, Members outlined a number of comments and queries.

With reference to paragraph 5.1, it was suggested that the phrase 'figure would rise by' should be replaced by 'figure should rise to' as this would prevent the figures quoted as savings from being misleading.

With reference to paragraph 8.4.7 in which it was stated that the contract for landfill disposal at Maw Green was soon to be considered for replacement or extension was questioned. It was asserted that the residents affected by this were under the impression that the landfill contract would end indefinitely in 2016. Ray Skipp noted that it was his understanding that the current contract was due to run until 2012 with an option to extend to 2014. The Committee were reassured that the correct contractual situation would be sought and subsequently communicated to residents. It was suggested that whilst this would be useful, it would be most appropriate to consult with residents if any change to current arrangements were to be considered.

A concern was raised over whether the sorting firm in Deeside would be prepared to pick up all of Cheshire East's non-separated waste. This concern was expressed due to a recent Community and Local Government departmental report which had stated that some recycling firms had rejected some waste and put it in landfill, an obvious issue for local authorities who could be fined for going over-quota. It was explained that the contract with the Deeside firm stipulated that waste must be recycled and not put in landfill so this was not seen to be an issue.

It was also expressed that more clarity was required in terms of what Cheshire East offered the larger family/household. For instance, it was queried whether the authority would be able to offer a 360 litre wheelie bin instead of two 240 litre bins.

Additionally, in terms of the communication campaign as part of the phased roll out if changes, it was suggested that the Portfolio Holder and Scrutiny Chairman review the letter going out to households to assess its appropriateness.

Attention was drawn to the need for provision to be made at recycling centres for people to bring their old authority branded boxes to prevent them being left at the side of the road.

Regarding the recycling site at Deeside, the Portfolio Holder suggested that it would be useful for the Committee to go on a site visit to oversee the facility themselves. He also confirmed, in relation to an earlier point made by Mr. Tomlinson regarding carbon reduction targets, that figures were currently being finalised in partnership with the Carbon Trust and that these would be made publicly available.

A concern was raised regarding the possibility of waste being used for fuel. It was confirmed that that contract with the Deeside firm stipulated that waste must be recycled but it was noted that it was unclear whether use as fuel would constitute recycling. It was suggested that the detail of the contract be reviewed for the sake of clarity.

Attention was drawn to those households that did not have the capacity for a wheelie bin and whether provision could be made to provide different coloured bags to encourage recycling regardless. It was confirmed that was something that was being looked at. Additionally, it was suggested that it would be useful if the bin collection helpline could be made clearer on all relevant recycling literature.

The Chairman questioned what was going to happen regarding household recycling centres, as these were often a resource that residents found important. It was confirmed that a review would be carried out to decide the best use of the facilities. As a final point, the Chairman queried whether the service would be setting any recycling targets. It was answered that whilst there were no central government targets, the service would be setting themselves realistic yet demanding performance targets.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the report be accepted and that the proposed redesign of waste and recycling collection services be endorsed.
- b) That the following issues be considered
 - The wording in paragraph 5.1 be altered from 'figure will rise by' to 'figure will rise to'
 - That the detail regarding the Maw Green landfill site contract be communicated to the affected residents, with any change to the status quo going to consultation.
 - That the detail regarding the waste recycling contract with the Deeside facility be reviewed to see whether use as fuel could be considered as recycling.
 - More clarity be provided on what Cheshire East offered to large families/households in terms of home recycling facilities.
 - That the letter informing residents of the proposed changes be offered to the Portfolio Holder and Scrutiny Chairman for review and comment.
 - That provision be made at recycling centres for residents to dispose of old authority boxes.
 - That provision be made for residents without the requisite space for wheelie bins to receive different coloured bags.
 - That the number for the bin collection helpline be made visible on all relevant literature.
 - That Members be invited to a site visit to the Deeside sorting facility in the new civic year.

The meeting commenced at 10.05 am and concluded at 11.20 am

Councillor G M Walton (Chairman)